

## Sunday Plaforms

Sunday, December 4, 2011

### *The Spirit of Giving*

**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**



Growing up in an American environment of abundance, Hugh Taft-Morales found the holiday season full of mixed messages. While being reminded at Thanksgiving to be thankful for all that he had, Christmas focused on getting more and more stuff. How can the spirit of giving be returned from consumerism to community? In our collective cultural orgy of avarice, can we instead offer those we love the greatest gift: our full and compassionate presence? Here's to strengthening relationships and building caring communities this holiday season!

Sunday, December 11, 2011

### *Soaring Past 7 Billion: Population Challenges for a Crowded World.*

**Speaker: John Seager, President and CEO of Population Connection**

Population Connection ([www.popconnection.org](http://www.popconnection.org)) is the pre-eminent grassroots group for population education and advocacy with 140,000 members and supporters including 50,000 participating educators. Founded in 1968 as Zero Population Growth (ZPG), Population Connection focuses on achieving global population stabilization through universal awareness and access to voluntary family planning together with the full empowerment of women. It seeks to engage students in think-



John Seager

ing about global population growth through lively, thought-provoking presentations focused on causes and impacts, and how we can meet those challenges. Population Connection has been engaged in population issues for more than four decades on hundreds of college campuses.

John Seager previously served with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during the Clinton Administration. John was also Chief of Staff for former U.S. Representative Peter H. Kostmayer (D-PA), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs and Interior committees. A graduate of Trinity College (CT) with a B.A. in Political Science, John travels throughout the country making presentations on global population growth. John has written articles on population stabilization, including its connections to poverty, its future outcomes and the concern about population decline in some highly developed nations. He has lectured and presented at the University of Chicago, Smith College, and the University of California, San Diego, and many others. John may be reached at [john@popconnect.org](mailto:john@popconnect.org) or by calling (202) 974-7700.

Sunday, December 18, 2011

### *Winter Solstice Celebration*

**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

Come celebrate the Winter Solstice with candlelight, spoken word, and music. Members and friends gather together to honor the best of the holiday season – the love, friendship, and community that help us flourish through the dark winter months. Come add to the light of human understanding and joy! All are welcome.

Sunday, December 25, 2011

No service.

## CAST OF "FAMILY ALBUM"



Photo by Betsy Lightbourn

**Diana Cavallo** (1st row, right) won the EHSOP's 2011 One Act Playwriting contest for "Family Album" which was given a dramatic reading at the Oct 30 platform before an enthusiastic audience of nearly 100, and a talk-back of 50 participants. The play featured a confrontation between two sisters (both writers) played by **Amanda Grove** (1st row left) and **Jessica DalCanton** (2nd row middle) and directed by **Karen DiLossi** (2nd row left), that raised serious ethical questions regarding suicide and the sense of personal and family betrayal. The playwriting contest was initiated by Ethical Society member and playwright **Pat McGeever** (2nd row right).

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**"Get-to-Know-Us-Social"**  
**Sunday, December 4, at 7:30 p.m.**

The "Get-to-Know-Us-Social" offers interested visitors and newcomers the opportunity to mingle over wine and cheese with established members as we discuss some of the ideas central to Ethical Culture and the life of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. After a brief 15-minute presentation by Society Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, there will be informal Q&A and conversation about our individual and collective journeys toward more a more fulfilling and ethical life!



**Monday, November 21, 7:30-9:30PM**

**"The Day the Universe Changed"**  
**A philosophically fun video and discussion series**



Come view and discuss a video series by James Burke, *The Day the Universe Changed*. Burke explores with wit and wisdom links between knowledge and reality through stories about the history of Western Civilization.

Join Ethical Culture Leader Hugh Taft-Morales for the third installment on **Monday, December 19, from 7:30-9:30PM**: "A Matter of Fact: Printing Transforms Knowledge." Open to the public.



## Human Rights Day

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," with the United States—especially Eleanor Roosevelt—playing a major role. The Preamble and 30 articles that comprise this Declaration can be read at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>. In 1950, December 10 was established as Human Rights Day to commemorate this Declaration.

This year on Human Rights Day our Society will host the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia for a celebration of the existence and implementation of the Declaration. The theme of the program this year will involve those in the Philadelphia area who are combating **local occurrences of modern day slavery**. For a preview, see: [http://www.patcoalition.org/who\\_we\\_are.html](http://www.patcoalition.org/who_we_are.html) Other local human rights organizations will participate as well, and there will be refreshments and plenty of opportunity to network.

The event is free and open to the public. It will begin at **5:00 PM** at the Ethical Society, 1906 Rittenhouse Square, on **Saturday, December 10**. More information will be provided closer to the time of the event.

## Worldly Wisdom

Meets **December 20 at 7 PM**. The readings are Frederick Douglass' autobiography, Elie Wiesel's "Night" and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from the Birmingham Jail."



### Quote-Unquote

*"All of us who are concerned for peace and triumph of reason and justice must be keenly aware how small an influence reason and honest good will exert upon events in the political field."*

--Albert Einstein



## Wine and Cheese Party

Our Ethical Action Committee and the Amnesty International - Philadelphia Chapter have joined in inviting all members and friends of the EHSOP to a Wine and Cheese Holiday Party. This will occur in our building on **Thursday December 15, 7 to 9 PM**. While you sip wine, there will be short talks about various human rights issues addressed by the EAC and AI, and then an opportunity to sign letters written for the Amnesty International USA Write-A-Thon.

## Thank you for your service From Betsy Lightbourn

Many thanks to those who have joined the **ush rush** this fall and have been pleasantly surprised by how much easier this important job has become with lightened responsibilities: **Marta Guttenberg, Terry Martin-Murley, Lyle Murley, Garry O'Rourke, Henry Pashkow, Linda Richardson, David Ralston, and Harry Thorn**, you make us proud and keep up the good work.



Since we need two ushers every Sunday, we can use additional volunteers. If you would like to serve our community by ushering either regularly (one Sunday every month or two) or as your schedule permits, please contact Betsy Lightbourn at [elighbourn@verizon.net](mailto:elighbourn@verizon.net) or [215-575-1128](tel:215-575-1128).





## Behind the Scenes - Part I

Temma Fishman

It's Sunday morning at the Ethical Society. The lobby and auditorium are brightly lit, warm and clean, beckoning you to enter. The chairs are arranged in neat rows and flowers grace the podium. Welcomed by today's greeter, you pick up your folded program, prepared by office manager, **Dotti Wesley**, and wait expectantly for the platform to begin. You have received your newsletter on time because of the diligence of **Nick Sanders**, **Pat McGeever** (editor) and **Janice Moore** (layout designer), so you glimpsed today's topic, thanks to Education Committee member, **Henry Pashkow**, who wrote the notice of it.

You are ready to be informed and uplifted by the speaker, who might be our leader **Hugh Taft-Morales** or one invited by the Education Committee. **Kasia Marzec-Salwinski**, our talented pianist, is about to dazzle you with her performance of musical pieces chosen to highlight this morning's topic. Probably you are not particularly focused on the effort expended by the volunteers and staff who make this all possible, so let me take you behind the scenes.

**Erich Coopersmith**, one of our two custodians, has been busy setting out the parking cones and readying the auditorium and lobby for the platform. He arranged the chairs, set up the microphone and nametag kiosk and prepared the Weston Room for talkback. When you visit the bathroom, you will find it stocked with paper products and clean, through Erich's efforts and that of our cleaning service. Those who volunteered to serve as ushers, obtained by **Betsy Lightbourn**, have completed setting up the auditorium and lobby.

The members scheduled to provide today's snack (overseen by Community Committee chair, **Ken Greiff**), are busy upstairs setting it up, along with the urns of coffee and hot water, cups, napkins, sugar, half-and-half, etc, so all will be ready for you when you climb the stairs.

More details about the work of this committee will be in Part Two.

Skillful **Terry Martin-Murley**, who stepped up to take over for **Ellen Rose**, who chaired it masterfully for several years, heads our Education Committee. To quote Terry,

*"Broadly, the Education Committee is responsible for facilitating Society community-wide learning. That mandate dictates these tasks: researching and inviting speakers for the Sunday morning platform program; setting up and coordinating adult education classes on ethical subjects; planning annual celebrations presented at platforms; hiring the Music Director; providing child care; training and scheduling ushers; planning the summer platforms of book discussions and colloquies; and working with the Ethical Action Committee to set up one-time educational events. Every committee member (see list of members in this newsletter) has participated in inviting and scheduling the 19 platform programs thus far planned for the 2011-12 year. To identify the work of the committee as collaborative is an understatement. The creativity and diligence of these intrepid team members make it possible to fulfill our educational mission, 'to analyze the principles of Ethical Humanism in the light of contemporary experience and to offer programs to our members and the community at large that express those principles'."*

With considerable thought and work, the Education Committee planned our inspiring Fall Festival, the ever-popular Humanist Thanksgiving program and the magical, candle-lit Winter Solstice Celebration coming up on December 18th. Our platforms present the Society's face to the community. They are our "main event". Without this committee's dedication, there would be no Sunday platform.

**Dotti Wesley** has prepared the sign announcing next week's platform that the ushers will put up in the display outside the building. Among her many duties, which include supervising the custodians and cleaning service, and honoring the frequent requests of members including

the Board of Trustees, she works to maintain and increase the rentals so necessary to keeping our Society going. We cannot maintain our beautiful old building and programs on pledges alone.

Maintaining and advancing our Society and its programs is the main function of our Finance Committee, headed by new board member and Treasurer **Linda Richardson**, who stepped right up to the plate when asked to serve. Linda is working with office manager, **Dotti Wesley**, to create an accounting system that will work even better for us than the one we have, and will serve us through the years ahead. Linda is responsible for creating the Society's Annual Budget, that of Camp Linden, and for preparing monthly financial reports for both. To quote Linda,

*"Of particular notice is the work of Nick (Sanders) and Garry (O'Rourke). As members of the Building Committee, they work tirelessly on keeping the building afloat. Our Green Building Project, monitored by Nick, is putting in new items such as windows and heating to make our building energy-efficient. Garry works to respond to each and every issue of the building--which is a feat, considering the age of our building and the lack of money for upkeep!"*

The Building Committee works closely with the Finance Committee. See Page 4 of this issue for their members. Also, be sure to examine the beautiful, energy- and money-saving windows that are now installed.

I could say much more about all those I've mentioned and the dedicated service they all provide, but that would take up the entire newsletter. Learn more in Part Two about the other committed people working behind the scenes to bring you that inspiring Sunday morning and other experiences that keep our Society vital-- such as the Personnel Committee (**Doris Dabrowski**), Camp Linden (**Jeff Dubb**), our Community Committee (**Ken Greiff**), our website (**Nick Sanders**), publicity efforts (**Betsy Lightbourn**), Ethical Action Committee (**Kate Esposito**) and more, much more. I may need to write Part Three.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## ***Education Committee***

Terry Martin-Murley (Chair), Arnold Fishman, Temma Fishman (ex officio), Marta Guttenberg, Betsy Lightbourn, Pat McGeever, Hugh Taft-Morales (ex officio), Lyle Murley, Herry Pashkow, Sally Redlener, Harry Thorne, Sharon Wallis, Bertha Waters, and Leonard Weeks. They meet the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm in the Weston Room.

## ***The Ethical Action Committee***

We urge members and friends of the Society to “walk the talk” of trying to make this a better world. Our projects include feeding homeless men at a local church shelter, investing in micro-lending projects in the developing world, distributing dictionaries to 3rd graders at local public schools, and supporting Camp Linden. We hosted a Peace Day Sing-Along outside the Society on Rittenhouse Square on September 21, International Peace Day. We successfully urged our Board of Directors to endorse the Shale Gas Outrage in September against fracking for natural gas in Pennsylvania.

We are becoming more involved in “bigger picture” issues including supporting the People’s Budget as a progressive way to reduce the deficit while protecting the integrity of our safety net and creating jobs and we are anticipating a membership drive for the Southern Poverty Law Center, our Elliott-Black Award nominee, in February. We work with the local chapters of Amnesty International and Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. We are supportive of Occupy Philly, gathering material goods and working on a statement of support. And we are looking forward to lending some elbow grease to the Martin Luther King Holiday National Day of Service. Our members are Kate Esposito, Chair, Temma Fishman, Ron Coburn, Marta Guttenberg, and Doris Leicher. We meet on the first Wednesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Weston Room.

## ***Finance Committee***

Chaired by Linda Richardson,  
Treasurer

Members: Doris Dabrowski, Garry O’Rourke, Jeff Dubb, Nick Sanders, Arnold Fishman, with Hugh Taft-Morales and Temma Fishman (ex officio).

## ***Building Committee***

Garry O’Rourke (chair) and Nick Sanders.

## ***Board of Trustees***

Temma Fishman, President; Jeff Dubb, Vice-President; Nick Sanders, Secretary; Linda Richardson, Treasurer; Leader Hugh Taft-Morales (ex-officio); Kate Exposito; Ken Greiff; Arnold Fishman; Marta Guttenberg; and Garry O’Rourke. ◇



*Photo by Temma Fishman*

Sally Redlener, ‘behind the scenes’ during the production of “Family Album,” prepares a witchy repast.

## ***Hugh Taft-Morales Installation Ceremony Planned for April 15***

“Why a ceremony in April?” you might wonder. Our new leader Hugh Taft-Morales has already settled in, as he has acknowledged in his inspiring November 6 platform, “The Ache for Home,” and in the many ways in which he has connected with us over the short time he has served as our leader. Exploring the meaning of home, he said that in his home away from home here in Philadelphia he has from the very beginning felt the fit comfortable “like an old slipper.” And we whole-heartedly agree.

An Installation Ceremony planned for late afternoon, Sunday April 15, allows us through music, words, and camaraderie to acknowledge and celebrate our Society’s partnership with Hugh, and formally communicate what we expect of each other and our plans and commitments for working together to meet these expectations. This special occasion promises a time filled with the joy of coming together for introducing Hugh to the Philadelphia religious and social justice communities with whom we work and hope to build strong relationships. It offers the opportunity to showcase Philadelphia’s rich 126-year history of Ethical Humanism.

While installation ceremonies are well established in liberal Protestant congregations, Ethical Culture has just recently introduced the practice with moving ceremonies at the Washington Ethical Society for leaders Mary Herman and Amanda Poppei. The EHSop will be only the second society to offer such a celebration, so there is a lot of room for creativity and innovation as we seek to plan an event that truly has meaning for us.

I’m pleased and grateful for the opportunity to coordinate the planning of such a joyful occasion, and for the committee of dedicated and creative people who have enthusiastically agreed to work with me – **Marta Guttenberg, Linda Richardson, Sharon Wallis, and Leonard Weeks** – to make this event both meaningful and memorable for Hugh and members of the Society.

—Betsy Lightbourn, Chair,  
Installation Ceremony Team

# December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
<b>*4</b> <b>11:00 a.m.</b> <i>The Spirit of Giving</i> <b>Hugh Taft-Morales</b> <b>7:30 p.m.</b> <b>Get-to-Know-Us Social</b> <b>Hugh Taft-Morales</b>	5	6	<b>7</b> <b>Meetings</b> 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	8	9	<b>10</b> <b>Human Rights Day</b> <b>5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>*11</b> <b>11:00 a.m.</b> <i>Soaring Past 7 Billion: Population Challenges for a Crowded World.</i> <b>John Seager</b>	12	<b>13</b> <i>Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting</i> <b>7:00pm</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Meetings</b> 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. Community Committee	<b>15</b> <b>Ethical Action/Amnesty Int'l. Wine &amp; Cheese Party</b> <b>7-9:00 p.m.</b>	16	17
<b>*18</b> <b>11:00 a.m.</b> <i>Winter Solstice Celebration</i> <b>Hugh Taft-Morales</b>	<b>19</b> <b>The Day the Universe Changed</b> <b>7:30-9:30p.m.</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Worldly Wisdom</b> <b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Meeting</b> 7:30 p.m. EHSOP Board	22	23	24
25 No Service.	26	27	<b>28</b> <b>Meeting</b> 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Meeting	29	30	31
*Child care provided during all platforms						



## December Birthdays

- |                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 3: Jack Schwar       | 14: Anna Gay Freed        |
| 5: Josh Bickford     | 14: Richard L. Kiniry     |
| 7: Bill Coffey       | 21: Bertha Stovall Waters |
| 8: Jesse Zelnick     | 23: Bob Moore             |
| 10: Ronald F. Coburn |                           |



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**Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia**

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader  
Richard L. Kiniry, Leader Emeritus

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## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS



**Flower Dedications - David  
Ralston, Coordinator**

December 4 -- Carole Erb -- In  
memory of Ellen Rose

December 11 -- Carol Love -- In  
loving memory of my partner and past  
president of the Philadelphia Ethical  
Society, Harold L Summers

December 18 -- Linda Richardson --  
In honor of Bertha Waters' birthday  
on December 21



**House of Ushers  
-Betsy Lightbourn,  
Coordinator**

December 4 - T.B.A.  
December 11 - Harry Thorn  
December 18 - T.B.A.



**Greeters - Ken Greiff,  
Coordinator**

December 4 - T.B.A.  
December 11 - Harry Thorn  
December 18 - T.B.A.



**Coffee Hour Lunch  
Cleanup**

December 4 - Group A-D  
December 11 - Group E-K  
December 18 - Group L-O

***Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia***

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